

## Reminiscences of the Stage.

### JOE COWELL'S THIRTY YEARS AMONG THE PLAYERS.\*

THESE are the gossiping reminiscences of an old Comedian, delivered with as much freedom and familiarity as if detailed to some boon companion over a mug of beer at the Fountain, or a glass of brandy-and-water at Windust's. The punctilio with which most authors disguise the names of living personages, by dashes and asterisks, is held in great contempt by Joe, for he gives us in full the christian and patronymic designation of the "persons directly and indirectly connected with the drama," that figure in his adventures. The jovial comedian is no more scrupulous in regard to himself than to others—he conceals nothing of his own character—he throws away his professional mask, and, like most members of his profession with whom we have been acquainted, never appears to be acting when he is off the stage. The gossip, both oral and written, "of the abstract and brief chronicles of the times," has always possessed to us this charm, that the affectations of standing and respectability, the pride of position, stateliness of character, which fetter and restrain the conversation and confessions of most men, are discarded by the wearers of the sock and buskin; with them you always have the conviction that whatever faults of character or of morals may be displayed, you are at least holding intercourse with the real spirit of a man, and not with a counterfeit presentiment dressed up to excite your admiration and wonder. To those who share the feeling, a fund of amusement will be found in the frank confessions of the Comedian, although it must be admitted, that there are some anecdotes detailed which are better suited to the green-room than to the family circle. The first part of the book is employed in detailing the adventures of the historian; and from this, as well as from part second, which records his reminiscences, we shall extract somewhat largely, for the diversion of our readers.

#### HIS FIRST DOMESTIC PLAY.

I cannot but regret these delightful visions of my childhood, which, like the fine colors we see when our eyes are shut, are vanished for ever.

ALEXANDER POPE.

THE day, big with fate, arrived, and "the best actors in the world"—I think four in number. One did n't speak, but merely rung a little bell, and snuffed the candles, and when he put one out we all laughed, and he made a very formal bow; he was a comical-looking creature, dressed in large, white Turkish trowsers, and a footman's jacket. Preparations immediately commenced; the dining parlor was speedily unfurnished, and the adjoining room "thrown into one," that is, as far as wide-opening a common-sized door could make two rooms into one. Chairs, sofas, and ottomans, were placed in rows, and elevated, in the back apartment, where the servants and humble neighbors were to be accommodated, to peep through the open door over our heads. All the flat candlesticks in the house were put in a line, in front of the seats intended for the family, and separated from them by a long board nailed on edge. How well do I remember, with what wonder and admiration I looked on at the

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\* THIRTY YEARS PASSED AMONG THE PLAYERS in England and America, interspersed with Anecdotes and Reminiscences of a variety of persons directly and indirectly connected with the Drama, during the theatrical life of Joe Cowell, Comedian, written by himself.

adroit manner in which signal Jacks, ensigns, and blue-peters, wind and bed-curtains, were furled, puckered, tacked, and tied, by a slim, long-nosed young gentleman, in shirt-sleeves, knee-breeches, and blue worsted stockings, to form the wings and drops of this mimic stage! At length all was completed—the performance was to commence “at early candle-light!” never do I recollect so long an afternoon as that was but once since, and that was, five hours passed in a sponging-house, waiting for bail. At length the day drew in, “and night, the lover’s friend,” advanced; the bell was rung, and the seats in the rear immediately occupied, according to the age and grade of the party. We were placed in front, the governor’s at our backs, ready to explain any doubtful point, and direct our department: our general instructions were, to clap our hands when she did, and not to laugh; this latter command I made up my mind to disobey; and I did. To her supposed superior judgment in juvenile matters had been left the control of the entertainment, and she had selected “*Hamlet*,” (only a portion of the tragedy, I suppose), but whether to suit her own taste, or her pupils’, I can only imagine. She was a romantic little body. She hated me with all her heart, but was too prudent to say so; and I hated her with all my soul, and said so to everybody. She had a very pretty, ill-natured looking face, and small, neat figure, in despite of one very crooked leg; this fact I discovered in consequence of her tumbling, head foremost, over a stile one slippery day; and for laughing most heartily—who could help it? I was locked up in a cupboard, at the door of which I kicked so lustily for half an hour, they were obliged to let me out, “*I made such a noise!*”

I forget if there was any avowal, or an apology for one in any way; but music, from my infancy, being as familiar as a household god, it was not likely to live in my memory. I suppose they began the play where Horatio informs Hamlet of his “last night of all” adventure, for I recollect nothing preceding that dialogue, which I was astonished to find I had often read in that excellent book for children, “*Enfield’s Speaker*.” I love that book still: it gave me the first relish for more substantial food, and if I can sell this, I’ll buy a copy for my grandson. Presently the Ghost glided in from behind a French flag—there was one on each side of the room, with the English ensign over it—enveloped in a white sheet, something white on his head, his face whitewashed, and a white truncheon in his hand. All was breathless attention; but, before he had time to reply to Hamlet’s earnest inquiries, I shouted out, with all my might, “That’s the man who nailed up the flags!” for, in defiance of his white-all-over-ness, I recognized in the Ghost my friend in the knee-breeches, for whom I had held the hammer, and helped so nicely (as he said) in the morning. The governor gave me one of her withering looks, but all the rest of the audience laughed most heartily; so did Hamlet, so did the Ghost, till his white sheet shook again.

Hamlet—“methinks I see him now”—was a slim, round-faced, good-looking young man, and, I imagine, rather effeminate in his manner; for all agreed he was very like our very pretty housemaid Sally. He was dressed in a suit of modern black, a frill about his neck, with a silver cord and tassel, his head powdered, (the fashion of the time); a spangled red cloak; the order of the garter around his leg; a broad-brimmed, black velvet hat, turned up in front, and a large diamond shoe-buckle, supposed to enclose one tall, white feather. But Horatio had five, (we all counted them); his waistcoat, too, was nearly covered with gold, and his cloak was spangled all over; he wore light blue pantaloons, and red shoes—I forget the color of his hat. He was decidedly my favorite, and I believe the favorite of all; at any rate, the children and servants thought as I did, that he was worth all the rest of them put together; besides, “in the course of the evening,” he sung a fine loud song, about ships and the navy, and danced a sailor’s hornpipe; but whether they were introduced in the tragedy or after it, I know not. He appeared to have twice as much to say as Hamlet had, and what he did say he said three times as loud; all the auditors in the next room could hear every word he uttered; and, as more than half could not see him through the open door, it was quite enough to make him a great favorite in their estimation. The coachman said he heard one speech while he was feeding the horses; and the stable was at least one hundred yards from the house; no doubt the same speech which frightened two of the youngest children. They cried, and, at their own request, were sent to bed.

Hamlet made several long soliloquies, and as he looked me straight in the face, I thought he addressed me in particular; so when he inquired,

“Whether ’tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles—”

I replied, “If I were you I’d go to sea.” This called forth a most joyous shout from the next room, for even then I was the low-comedian of the household; but my female Mentor said I was a very bad boy, (I was used to her saying that,) and if I spoke again I should be sent to bed. So when I thought Hamlet was going to make me another long speech, I shut my eyes and made up my mind to go to sleep till it was over. But my friend Horatio soon roused me. In fact, he was one of the many actors who are determined to be heard, at any rate; and “tired Nature” must be very tired indeed if she could take her “second course” while he was declaiming. I have

met with many *Horatios* since, and they, like my *first impression*, are always great favorites with children and the uninformed. There was a *star* Horatio engaged in the last company I played with, and nine-tenths of the audience thought and said he was a very fine actor. Well, let them think so; I’ll not contradict them; I was sorry myself when I was undeceived.

Hamlet spoke Collins’s beautiful “*Ode on the Passions*,” he didn’t deliver it as the governor read it; I thought then he was right and she was wrong; I have changed my opinion since. The Ghost sang a comic song, and the whole party

“Ye mariners of England,”

the candle-snuffer giving his “powerful aid” in the chorus.

Exhausted with wonder and delight, I went to bed. I prayed every night that I might be made a good boy and go to heaven. I fell asleep, and dreamed that I had got there, and was surrounded by dozens of Hamlets, and Horatios, and Ghosts in red wigs and striped stockings, dancing, and singing “all manner of songs,” and the angels applauding them in the most boisterous manner; but when I waked, I didn’t “cry to dream again,” for, to my astonishment, I heard Horatio singing away with all his might in the housekeeper’s room, amid clapping of hands and shouts of laughter.

Before I closed my eyes again that night, I made up my mind that I would rather be that Horatio, and do “all that,” than be Horatio Nelson, though he had lost an eye, and banged the French.

“Where then did the Raven go?

He went high and low;

Over hill, over dale, did the black Raven go.

Many autumns, many springs,

Travell’d he with wandering wings;

Many summers, many winters—

I shan’t tell half his adventures.”—COLERIDGE.

HIS FIRST LOVE ADVENTURE.

“Truly, in my youth I suffered much extremity for love.”—SHAKESPEARE.

I was just “turned sixteen,” as the children say, but in manner and appearance much older. Three years in the navy, the usual hardships of a sailor’s life, a complexion stained with salt-water and the sun of many climes, are materials to make boys into men at very short notice. I had three weeks’ leave of absence, prior to a twelve months’ cruise on the West India station. My mother lived next door to Grosvenor Chapel, and on Sunday morning, determining to see all that could be seen, (as my days were numbered,) I “dropped in” to witness the service. In using Paul Pry’s flippant expression, I must not now, nor then, be understood to have any but the most profound respect for all religious ceremonies; but, having been educated a rigid Roman Catholic, at that period my entering an Episcopal house of God was induced by pure curiosity. In the adjoining pew sat an elderly, tradesmanlike-looking man, with a pug nose, and a round, unmeaning face, resembling altogether a very good-natured bull-dog; with him a plump old lady, and an elegantly-dressed young creature—their daughter, of course; but where could she get such an abominable, plebeian-looking father and mother? I felt angry that nature had made herself so ridiculous. She was most beautiful, refined in her deportment, and a perfectly aristocratic face. Her fine eye, I thought, sometimes wandered toward mo; a naval uniform, in those days, was quite as attractive as a soldier’s is in these; she sat close to me, nothing but the abominable bulkhead of the pew between us,

“Where she kneel’d, and saint-like,  
Cast her fair eyes to heaven, and pray’d devoutly.”

An angel’s whisper! there is no preaching I ever heard can produce on my mind such a pure devotional feeling as listening to little children and pretty women saying their prayers; I always want to go to heaven along with them directly. I thought I heard her sigh. Our eyes met as she said Amen; my heart palpitated, and “Amen stuck in my throat.” I had been in love two or three times before, and have been in love ever since, and perfectly understood all the symptoms; but, as Ollapod says, there were “matrimonial symptoms in this case.” In my own mind, I had got the consent of my mother, (who could refuse to permit a union with such a divinity?) and had retired, on a *British midshipman’s half-pay*, to a “cottage near a wood,” with a cow, cabbage-garden, chickens, and children. The only impediment that appeared to cross my path to preëminent felicity was her pudding-faced, pug-nosed parents; my mother would decidedly object to them, whatever she might think of their daughter. I stood up in the pew, and popped on my hat with the cockade behind; the old gentleman pointed out my error; I thought I saw a child-like giggle play over the beautiful face of my adored; I would have given two years’ pay to be shot on the spot, or tossed overboard in a gale of wind, or mast-headed, out of sight of land or petticoats, for the rest of my life. The service ended, I gained the door as they did, and tendered an awkward acknowledgment of thanks to the old man for correcting my ridiculous position.

“Sir,” said he, with a plethoric kind of chuckle, “you gentlemen of the navy, sir, don’t often go to church, I suppose, sir; I love a sailor, sir; I’m a loyal subject, sir; God bless the king, sir, and God Almighty bless the queen, sir. She, sir, is, sir, the mother, sir—that is, the queen-mother, sir—and I’m blessed, sir, if she oughtened to be

blessed, sir, for blessing the country, sir, with such a blessed lot of royal highnesses, sir. Sir, I'm a true-born Englishman, and a loyal subject, sir, and have the honor to be leather-breeches-maker, sir, to His Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex, sir," pointing, at the same time, to a sign over a bow-window, by the side of which he stopped, and rung a bell at the private entrance. The door was opened by a boy in undress livery; we bowed and parted. I looked up. Sure enough, there was "the precious evidence." "*William (I think) Creek, Tailor and Breeches-maker in ordinary to His Royal Highness, the Duke of Sussex,*" in green and gold letters, and the King's Arms in a semicircle over it, exactly four doors from my mother's house. I had followed my charmer (who was on the outside) at an angular distance of about three feet, sometimes on the curbstone, sometimes in the gutter, or, as a sailor might say, about two points to leeward. Now this was not *mauvaise honte* on my part, but prudence; for, upon coming alongside in the first instance, I found, to my astonishment, she was at least three inches taller than myself. In everyday language, she was what is called a magnificent creature,

"With beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear;"

a very effeminate, Miss Clifton style of woman. Over her sculptured form she had thrown a splendid scarlet mantle, trimmed with white ermine; a white hat, with a drooping red feather, adorned her classic head. I am still, and for years have been allowed to possess great taste for ladies' dress, but at the time I speak of, perhaps, it was a little Goldfinch-ish: "Sky-blue habit, scarlet sash, white hat, yellow ribbons, gold band and tassel—that's your sort!"

I was in love—most horribly in love—

"'Twas through my eyes the shaft had pierced my heart;  
Chance gave the wound that time could never cure."

But she was (oh, horrible thought!) the daughter of a leather-breeches builder, and my mother, like Rob Roy, had "an utter contempt for weavers, and all such mechanical persons." But then he made breeches for his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex! how might that soften down the bowels of aristocratic authority? There was hope in that thought, and I determined to be measured for a pair the next day: though I had but little time to wear them; for, on the station to which I was ordered, even if the service would permit the costume, the climate would not.

On the following morning I called on Mr. Creek.

"Sir, he's at breakfast, sir," said the knock-kneed boy in the gray livery I had noticed the day before; "but, sir, if 'tis anything particular, sir, I'll call him, sir."

"Do so, sir; I wish, sir, to see him, sir, directly, sir," said I, following the *sir-ish* fashion.

The bow-window apartment I had entered was covered with a handsome carpet; in the centre a billiard-like table, on which were writing materials, and the papers of the day; and the walls decorated with numerous mirrors. My prospect of consent began to brighten. If he was a breeches-maker, he didn't breakfast till ten o'clock, and kept a sort of livery-servant. I had barely time to think so much, and peep through a glass case, the width of the shop, covered with a demi-transparent green curtain, behind which at least thirty men were employed on a platform, stitching away at his royal highness's small-clothes, I suppose—when Mr. Creek appeared. His fat face was buttered from ear to ear, which he proceeded to wipe with his folded handkerchief, while in his peculiar style he paid me the compliments of the day. When he came to a pause, I begged him, in my most urbane manner, to measure me for a suit of clothes.

"Sir, with pleasure sir. A uniform suit, of course, sir? I pride myself on my uniform fits, sir? This coat is a little too much—"

I interrupted, no doubt, a learned lecture on what a uniform coat should be, by quietly saying, "I wish a plain suit, Mr. Creek."

"A plain suit, sir? Bless me, sir! have you left your ship for any length of time, sir?"

"I may shortly leave the navy altogether," said I, with a sigh. "I thought of the cottage and the cow; and as my mother cheerfully paid my bills at that time, and might not after I had retired from the service and married the tailor's daughter, prudence prompted me to order a green coat, red waistcoat, and leather breeches—a very fitting dress for rural felicity. The red vest I ordered in compliment to the color of my wife's cloak—that was to be; and I hinted, that if it could be made off the same piece of cloth that his daughter's mantle was composed of, I should prize it more highly. I imagined it was cabbage on an extensive scale."

"Oh, sir," said the old man, his little blue eyes twinkling on either side of his putty-like nose, "she's not my daughter. I—"

"God be praised!" exclaimed I, not waiting for his "*wish she was*" conclusion of his sentence, I suppose.

"Sir!" said he, his face suddenly assuming an expression of gravity which his fat-encumbered muscles seemed impossible for it to achieve, "sir—I beg pardon, sir—but I should like to know, sir, why you should appear so thankful, sir, that Anna is not my daughter, sir?"

ANNA! I heard her name for the first time; a pastoral, poetical, and pretty name—a real sailor's name:

"I call her Anna, Anne,  
Nan, Nance, or Nancy."

I blundered out, that I had thanked God that, in addition to her natural protector, she had a friend of his age and respectability to guide her moral deportment, of which I judged from the sacred place to which he had conducted her when we *first met*. A shade of doubt passed over his countenance; but he recollected I was his customer, and his natural good-humor and common sense prevailed. In his own way, he went on to explain that Anna had no father; he had died when she was an infant, and had left her mother "well to do in the world," with three children, all girls, two much older than Anna, and one long since married to a cousin of his wife. She was a native of —, in Berkshire; at her father's death, her mother had taken a milliner's shop, where Anna had learned the rudiments of the business, but had been sent to London under his care, and was now articled for three years (two and a half of which were yet to stretch their slow length along) to the Misses Twicross, the celebrated dress-makers in Bond-street, with a premium of fifty guineas, to be *finished*, as he called it.

Upon giving my name and address, the old man exclaimed, "Why, bless me, sir! I have sir, the honor, sir, to be in great favor with your mamma, sir; my neighbor, sir; and you, *you*, sir, it's very few people, it is, sir—" with a kind of confidential chuckle. "You see, sir, her kitchen-chimney was on fire, sir, and the maid-servants set up a terrible screeching, sir; and there was so much smoke, sir, that you could not see where the fire was, sir; and the parish engine, sir, being in the basement story of the chapel, sir, next house to hers, sir, as one may say, sir; I, sir, and my boy, sir, and the poor apple-woman, sir, that she kindly gives leave, sir, to sit at the corner of the court, sir, pulled it out, sir, and I dragged the hose into the passage, sir; but the fire went out, sir, before we could get any water, sir; but your good mamma, sir, coming down stairs, sir, and seeing me with the brass nozzle in my hand, sir, thought I had extinguished it, sir; and so, sir, whenever she speaks of me, sir, she always says, '*The good man that saved my property by putting out the fire—Mr.—what's his name? something that puts my teeth on edge—' Mr. Creek, ma'am,*' says Mary. 'Yes, Mr. Squeak—that's it.' The jolly old man chatted himself into a most familiar good-humor. I recounted some of my ship-shape adventures, and, well pleased with each other, we parted, with my promising (oh, how gladly!) to take a cup of tea with himself, and wife, and Anna, "just in the family-way," that evening. I am not going to tantalize my readers with a redomontade of love-making; suffice it to say, Anna had received an education far above her station: affable, nay, even free in her manner, "than those who have more cunning to be strange," but with a mind as simply pure and unpolluted as the stream that wanders through and adorns her native village. I readily obtained permission to save Mr. Creek the trouble of conducting her to Bond-street in the morning. The jovial old tailor had made us stand back to back, to decide our height; and he declared, "Anna, sir, is only an inch taller, sir, than you are *sir—good measure, sir.*" When, at an early hour the next day, we met, I had heels to my boots that placed me on a level with her at any rate; and, before we had crossed Grosvenor Square, I had good reason to believe that our hopes and wishes were more on an equality than our persons. Doubt not I was most punctual in my attendance to and from South Audley-street to Bond-street. Three times that week, and four the next, accompanied by the old people, we attended the theatre. The first legitimate play I ever beheld Anna sat beside me—"twas *Romeo and Juliet*. "They must have played it on purpose," said the innocent Anna, in a whisper, and her cheek wet with tears; and I, in my heart, damned the author for not letting them live and be happy.

Charles Kemble was the *Romeo*—the great Lewis, Meroutie—Miss Norton, Juliet—la, la (but I never saw a Juliet such as Shakespeare intended)—the glorious Mrs. Davenport, the Nurse—and Murray, the silver-toned, serene, and beautifully-natural Charles Murray, was the lovers' friend, the botanical Prior Lawrence. I passed two whole, dear, delicious Sundays in her society. Oh how sweet

"To walk together to the kirk,  
And all together pray!"

I spoke not of my difference of creed, for, for her sake, I would have turned Turk.

The old man was our confidant and councillor. "Sir, you must join your ship, sir, at the proper time, sir; and Anna, sir, must finish her time with the Misses Twicross's, sir, and get the worth of her fifty guineas, sir; and you must fight the enemies of Old England! Oh! I'm a loyal subject, sir; and when you're a Lieutenant, sir, and the old lady won't consent, sir, if you both, sir, think, sir, as you do now, sir, and there should come a peace, sir, you'll get your half pay, sir; you can teach transportation, navigation I mean, sir, and drawing, and painting, sir," (I had been well instructed, and had taken his and his wife's portraits, and Anna's "picture in little.") "and she will be mistress of her art, sir; I am well to do in the world, sir; have neither chick nor child; Anna's father was a good friend of mine, sir—lent me money when I first went into business, sir; but never fret, sir; take things cool, as I do, sir," wiping the perspiration from his fat forehead; "all will be right, sir; take my advice, sir." *I wish to God I had.*

The fatal second Sunday at length arrived—I thought, in the middle of the week. I had to set forth post, at 7 P. M., to insure my

being on board by gunfire on Monday morning; but it was past nine before I could finish all my oaths of constancy, and exchange those tokens sailors think so sacred.

With hope decking the future in the rainbow colors of love at seventeen, I rushed into the chaise, on a bright autumnal evening, and, faster than the sun, I seemed to travel on the same road to Portsmouth, to overtake him in a few weeks in the West Indies.

The tedium of many a weary middle-watch in that sun-burned sea has been relieved of its monotony in (castle-) building, the cottage, and the cow, the chickens and the children: and then,

"Look'd on the moon,  
And thought of Nancy."

#### HIS FIRST APPEARANCE.

The night arrived—January the twenty-third, 1812.

"The part of *Belcour* by a gentleman, his first appearance on any stage," attracted a full and very fashionable house. Admiral Calder, the commander of the port, and a large party, occupied the stage-box. I had many shipmates in harbor at the time, and some relatives: all, of course, attended, induced by pity; how I hate the word—scorn or curiosity.

I had been used to danger in many shapes, and fear is not an attribute of my nature, but I was most damnable frightened on that occasion. I spoke the words mechanically, but I could neither see nor hear; my mouth was parched; what to do with my hands I knew not; I deposited them in all sorts of places; if both arms had been amputated, I felt assured I should have been relieved of an abominable encumbrance. Embarrassed by my embarrassment, *Stockwell* bungled in one of his speeches: I repeated it, and then spoke mine in reply; the audience, confound them, laughed and applauded. I felt I had done wrong: my brain whirled in confusion, and I rushed off the stage before the conclusion of the scene, amid deafening shout, yells, and huzzas, such as are generally humanely bestowed upon the retreat from a butcher's stall of some poor devil of a dog with a tin kettle tied to his tail; and at that moment, I have no doubt, I experienced precisely the same sensations.

"For God's sake give me a glass of grog!" I stammered out; "and my dear sir," grasping the hand of the manager, kindly extended to me at the entrance, "finish the part for me: I feel my incapacity, and only regret my conceit caused me to make such a jack-ass of myself."

"Pho, pho! you must conclude what you have begun," said he, in his positive but gentlemanly manner; "the first plunge is over, you'll feel your power in the next scene; your great fault is, you try to do too much; stand still, *don't act*, and speak louder; think you are talking to some one in the gallery, and then, if you only whisper, you'll be heard all over the house: take another sup of brandy and water—there—that's your cue."

I felt encouraged by grog and good advice, and the next scene is a very effective one; I imitated Elliston as well as I could, and was admirably supported and encouraged by the manner of the excellent actress who performed Mrs. Fulmer, and I retired amid the unbounded applause of a brilliant and overflowing audience.

"There," said my mentor, triumphantly, "didn't I tell you how it would be! 'tis decidedly the best first appearance I have seen for years."

I gained courage as the comedy proceeded; and at its conclusion, the manager, amid thunders of applause, announced it for repetition on the Saturday following: "The part of *Belcour* by the young gentleman who had been so favorably received that evening."

The barbarous fashion was not then invented of demanding the presence of the object of supposed admiration or ridicule, to add to his miseries, by expecting him to speak, or bow, or make a fool of himself in some way or other, which, *nowadays*, these victims of vanity on both sides usually do.

#### MUNDEN, THE COMEDIAN.

Munden, who had been underlined for a week, arrived at last; the company were engaged in the rehearsal of the "Road to Ruin," he having written from Exeter to desire that he might be advertised for Old Dornton and Crack for that night; and his nonappearance at the time he stated had caused some uneasiness; he was followed by a porter with a large trunk. After cordially greeting the manager and the members of the company, with whom he was before acquainted, he said, "Sandford, my dear boy, lend me sixpence." And (in a voice, oh, how rich—rich is a mean phrase to convey an idea of its round, articulate, expressive power) he continued:

"I have had my wardrobe brought to the theatre; it saves trouble, and the expense of little boys bothering you for a penny a piece to carry a bundle. You left my other trunk at my lodgings, my good man?"

"Yes, sir," said the porter, shaking into the crown of his hat a tattered handkerchief, with which he had just removed the sweat of his brow.

"Here's a shilling, Mr. Munden," said Sandford; "I have n't a sixpence."

"Have you the change, my man?" inquired the great comedian.

"Have I change for what, sir?" said the porter.

"For the shilling, my dear boy," replied Munden.

"And is it less than a shilling that a gentleman like you would be offering a poor devil like myself for wheeling two big boxes nearly a mile? Sure the law allows sixpence a parcel, if it's only as big as your fist."

The law might have been argued, according to the statute in that case made and provided, till Munden had made the fellow laugh himself out of his pay altogether, had not Sandford sent the man off with a shilling, and requested the great actor to go on with the rehearsal.

"We have waited two hours for you already; your letter stated you would be here last night," said the manager.

"And so I should; but I could n't come without wheels," replied the comedian; "the stage broke down just as we got to Ivy Bridge, on purpose, no doubt, that the robbers might pillage me at the hotel there; the bloodsuckers took every shilling I had for bed and board, and bit me to death with fleas into the bargain. I had but three-pence left when I made my escape from them this morning; I offered them to the guard, after he had collected my baggage, and he told me to keep it, sir! the impudent scoundrel told me to keep it, and so I did," he continued, with a laugh worth the whole stage fare from London to Plymouth, "and treated myself to a pint of porter, and the odd ha' penny I gave to Roach's children to buy lollipops—to buy lollipops, sir, and bull's eyes; I stopped there on my way, to let them know I had arrived, and see if my room was ready."

This said Roache was an old friend of Munden's, and it is highly probable he had the room without charge. He kept a circulating library, of dirty, worn-out books, quack-medicines, job-printing, and children's toy kind of shop. The same man had exactly the same sort of establishment, a few years since, at the corner of Frederic and Market-streets, Baltimore, where he died; the members of his large family, who shared Munden's lollipop, are now all engaged in increasing the population of different parts of the Union.

"Sandford, it will only be necessary to go through my scenes—who's the Harry Dornton?" I was introduced. Surveying me from head to foot with a serio-comic look from such an eye! setting at defiance description, and the shade of enormous shaggy eyebrows, one of which would be amply sufficient to make two pair, even for Billy Wood.

"Are you perfect, sir, in the words?" said Munden.

"Quite, sir," I confidently replied.

"You will find Mr. Cowell," said the manager, "though a young actor, very attentive to any business you may instruct him in, when explained to him in the manner you are so well aware a gentleman expects."

Probably the hint was superfluous, for I ever received from that great actor the most marked attention. The day was so far advanced that we could n't repeat our rehearsal, and he invited me to take a chop with him at his lodgings, and after dinner to go over the scenes we were together in; which, for the sake of such instruction, I readily agreed to—it was literally a chop; we had one a piece, and a single sole between us (a very delicate flat fish about the size of the sole of your boot, both cheap and plentiful at Plymouth), and a pint of porter, of which I declined partaking, apparently to his great satisfaction. The whole dinner, which he praised both as to quantity and quality, he explained to me with great glee, "Had only cost a shilling: sixpence for the chops, three ha' pence for the fish, and the remainder for the bread, potatoes, and porter." The extreme parsimony of this most delicious actor induced every one to believe he was enormously rich, but at his death his fortune was proved much below the general calculation. Even his meanness was smothered in fun. He once told me in the Drury Lane Green-room, very seriously, that he had that morning advertised his grounds for rent, and discharged his gardener, because he had met a girl crying radishes "at three bunches a penny!" On asking a lady for the loan of an umbrella one wet day, she retorted, "Why, Mr. Munden, why do n't you buy one? you are rich enough."

"My dear, I've got a bran new one at home, I've had these two years."

"Then why do n't you use it, sir?"

"My dear child, if I brought it out it would be sure to rain, and I should get it wet and spoil the beauty of it."

Till the hour of going to the theatre we went over the scenes again and again; my willingness to receive instruction appeared to give him great satisfaction, and he prophesied a glorious reward for my perseverance, and instanced himself as a proof of the consequence: who could doubt he practised what he preached, when, in defiance of the labor before him for the night, and the fatigue of a journey, he, with all the enthusiasm of youth, for hours directed the support he required in his great character, which he had then played probably two hundred times?

He was, in my opinion, the best comedian I ever saw. He identified himself with a character, and never lost sight of it—his pathos went to the heart at once, and his humor was irresistible. In his latter years he was accused of sacrificing too much for the sake of gaining applause, but I believe he endeavored to alter his pure and natural style to suit the declining taste of his auditors, and compete with the caricaturists by whom he was surrounded. In playing

Ralph to his Old Brumage, at Drury Lane, I objected to some business he pointed out, as being unnatural. "Unnatural!" said he, with a sneer: "that has been my mistake for years. Nature be d—; make the people laugh."

But he's gone! and if there is any fun in the next world, he's in the midst of it.

"Sic transit gloria Munden."

#### THE HORSE AND THE MUSICIAN.

Among the horses at the Circus was a cream-colored Hanoverian charger, of extraordinary beauty and immense size, and went so proud in action, "as if he disdained the ground." Though nothing in his life was applicable to his name but the leaving of it (he was killed at sea), he was called Nelson.

Immediately after taking the direction of the establishment, I made myself acquainted with the titles and general character and qualifications of all the horses, but was not so well informed as to how the grooms, minor people, and musicians were called; and among the latter was a clarionet player, with less talent but with the same name as the horse—Nelson. But, as Juliet says,

"What's in a name? that which we call a rose,  
By any other name would smell as sweet."

On a Sunday, in the forenoon, Rodgers, an equestrian performer, and father to one of the first riders of the present day, called at my house, and requested to see me on very particular business. Upon inquiring his errand, he said, with much solemnity of manner,

"I'm very sorry to inform you, sir, that poor Nelson is dead."

"Dead!" said I, with astonishment, "why, Mr. Rodgers, it's impossible! he was well enough last night;" for, in passing through the stable, I had stopped to caress the beautiful animal, and he was as full of mischief and spirit as usual.

"Oh no, sir," said Rodgers, "he was very unwell for two days, and scarcely able to perform."

"Why, I knew nothing of it," I replied; "why didn't some of them let me know? There was no necessity for his being employed in anything but the entree; and, indeed, if he was sick, he shouldn't have been used even for that, if I had known it."

"You're very kind, sir, I'm sure," replied the friend of the dead musician. "H'll be a great loss to the concern; and he was such a kind, good creature."

"Why, as to his kindness, I can't agree with you there; he was most difficult to manage; but his loss, as you observe, will be irreparable. When did he die?"

"Early this morning. I was up with him all night. He kicked and rolled about in great agony, and you might have heard his groans for half a square."

"Poor creature! And what did they say was the matter with him, Mr. Rodgers?" I inquired.

"The colic, or something of that sort; and we think it was brought on by his eating cucumbers."

"Cucumbers!" said I; "why, where did he get cucumbers?"

"Mr. Blyth," he replied, "received some as a present, and he gave poor Nelson two or three."

"Well, my dear sir, they never could have hurt him; and if they were likely to do so, Mr. Blyth, of all others"—he was our riding-master—"would never have given them to him; you may depend upon it, Rodgers, it was the bots."

"Oh dear, no sir," said he, with a confident veterinary manner; "that's a disease as horses often dies on; but his was quite different; his body was all drawn up in a heap, and the sweat poured off him in pailfuls; we dosed him with brandy and laudanum, and kept rubbing of him, but before the doctor arrived he was a gone horse;" and then, with a sigh, he continued, "There's George Yeaman, and Williams, and a few more as came out with Old West along with him, wishes to pay him the compliment of giving him a funeral, and wants to know if you would be good enough to attend?"

"Oh, pooh! that's perfectly ridiculous, Rodgers. I respect your innocent-minded, good-hearted feeling; I have quite as good a right to be sorry for his death as any of you, but a funeral is all nonsense; we'll have him hauled away early in the morning, and thrown in the river."

"Sir!" said he, looking aghast.

"Are you going back to the circus, Mr. Rodgers?" I inquired.

"No, sir," said he, "but I live within a door or two."

"Well, then, you will greatly oblige me if you will call and tell Peter, or any of the grooms you may find there, to employ a butcher, or any one who understands the business, and have him skinned?"

"Sir! what! skinned?" said Rodgers, in astonishment.

"And if you please, tell them to have it done carefully, and be sure not to cut off his ears and tail; I intend to have him stuffed."

"Stuffed!" said Rodgers.

"Yes," said I; "and on the fourth of July, or other great occasions, we'll have him hoisted out for a sign, or use him for a dead horse, at any rate."

This brought our equivocal conversation to a climax; and, highly delighted at finding it was Nelson the musician instead of Nelson the horse who had been killed with cucumbers and kindness, the next morning I joined the mourners, and saw the poor fellow "quietly inurned."

During the time Lafayette was travelling through the Union, receiving the enthusiastic homage of all classes of persons, and, by the only mode in his power, showing his gratitude by kissing all the young women, shaking hands with the old, and blessing the little children, it so happened that my company was always in some city where he was not; but on his return to New York, I fortunately encountered him, and through the influence of the committee of arrangements, he honored the circus with a visit, which, of course, produced an overflowing house. The box appropriated for the use of himself and suite I had decorated with as many flags as I could borrow from volunteer and fire companies, mechanic and masonic societies, with the French and American ensigns unfolding each other in divers affectionate attitudes, interspersed with a profusion of every description of vegetable matter, with the exception of boughs of oak and laurel, which Billy Rider had been desired exclusively to obtain.

"There, sir, that's what you sent me for," said Billy, throwing down a huge bundle of shrubs.

"No, sir, it is not; I said oak and laurel."

"Divil a sprig of laurel is there, I believe, in the whole State of Jersey. By my word, sir, it was down to Weehawk I was, and back again twiced. As to the oak, by the powers, there's plenty o' that at the tops o' trees where no mortal man could touch a leaf of it, av he had the legs of Goliath. By my troth, now, they are mighty green and pretty—see the red berries on that darling there—depend on it, sir, d—the difference will the ould general know; he's had something better to do than to be bothering his brains about bothany; and all those flags and finery, that's the thing itself, sir, to tickle a Frenchman."

And I believe Rider was partially right, for upon conducting the marquis to his box, for the sake of saying something, I apologized for the lack of preparation in consequence of the shortness of the notice I had received of the honor he intended; and with earnest sincerity of manner, he exclaimed,

"Sir, it is most superb!"

It was notorious that he never remained more than half an hour, at farthest, at any theatre he attended; but (in my opinion) he showed his taste by witnessing the whole of our performance, and expressing his admiration at the practical jokes of the clown. I had, of course, sent refreshments to the party, which the committee, like all committees, appeared to enjoy most heartily; but observing the general didn't partake, I inquired personally if there was anything he "particularly wished," and he requested "a glass of sugar and water." Old Hays, the celebrated police-officer, whom I had stationed at the door to prevent his being killed with kindness, I dispatched for the desired beverage; and wishing "to take a drink" with the good old man, I ordered two glasses, slyly whispering Hays to put some gin in mine: when he returned, he gave me a cunning sort of thief-catching wink to direct me to my "sling;" but the general having the first choice, got the gin, and I the sugar and water. We drank without a remark; I don't know if the marquis ever repeated his dose, but I pledge my honor I never have mine.

#### MR. NOAH'S NEW PLAY.

M. M. Noah, who had already produced several dramatic pieces with success, manufactured a play called *The Grecian Captive*, which was performed for his uncle's benefit, A. Phillips. I was cast for what was said to be the best part in the piece; at all events, it was the longest; all I ever did know about it was the name, and that was Goodman. The drama was supposed to be written in blank verse, that is, good, wholesome, commonplace language, the wrong end foremost, after the manner of Sheridan Knowles;

"And to cram these words into mine ears  
Against the stomach of my sense,"

for one night only, was out of the question, and I made up my mind to speak the meaning of the part after what flourish my nature prompted, and so, indeed, I believe, had all the performers. Simpson and some other captives were discovered, in the first scene, digging away in a Turkish garden; I was a sort of overseer, and entered to them, after the manner of Sadi, in the Mountaineers, and recognised, somehow or another, in the captive I was chiding for idleness, "a beloved master," and Simpson and I were proceeding with an interesting dialogue after this fashion:

"CAPTIVE. My faithful Goodman, do I behold once more  
That honest form?  
"GOODMAN. Master, most dearly loved,  
Let an embrace assure me that I do not dream."

And as we were suiting the action to the word, he whispered in my ear,

"Dam'me, Joe, look at the books."

And, upon turning to the audience, every one in the front had a copy in his hand. To increase the attraction, the play had been published, and every purchaser of a box-ticket had been presented with a book, which arrangement I had never heard of till then. I am not easily embarrassed, but this annoyed me exceedingly. If I had not been the principal victim in the business—for I was on the stage nearly the whole of the piece—I could have enjoyed the anxiety.

ty of the audience endeavoring to find out where we were. You might see one thumbing over the leaves one after another, then turn them all back, listen an instant, and then begin again. Another appeal to his neighbor, and then shake his head in despair. I was assured very seriously by a young critic, the next day, that I had *actually sometimes cut out a whole page at a time*. But I could not laugh at it ; I was angry, and considered the arrangement a rudeness on the part of Mr. Phillips. At nearly the close of a long and laborious season, a whole company had cheerfully, for the sake of serving him undertaken to *get through* with a composition that the author himself could never wish should see daylight ; and though Phillips knew that not a soul could learn more than the action, he for the sake of a few dollars, lets an audience into a secret which, for their own sake as well as ours, they had better not have known.

If Joe Cowell would only give us "leave in writing," we should be glad to reprint his very amusing book. As it is, we may offer further extracts.

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